School report

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Swanton Morley VC Primary School

Manns Lane, Swanton Morley, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4PX

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

Swanton Morley VC Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel they belong in this warm and friendly school. The school's vision, 'Love your neighbour as yourself', makes a tangible impact on pupils. There are kind and caring relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils feel they are listened to, are safe and know that staff will help them with any worries they have. This is a supportive and nurturing community where everyone gets along well with one another.

Pupils respond positively to the expectations that the school sets and behave well. This means pupils move around school in a calm and orderly manner. In class, most pupils display strong attitudes to their learning. Pupils say that their teachers make lessons fun and help them to learn. As a result, most pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy the many ways in which they contribute to the school. For example, older pupils are proud of the way they help the younger children to practise their reading and how they contribute to Collective Worship by setting up the hall in readiness. Pupils access a range of clubs. These widen their interests and develop new talents, such as archery and playing in a band. They proudly represent their school in inter-school sports competitions. Trips, visits and visitors to the school enrich pupils' academic learning and broaden their horizons.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school continues to review its curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of pupils. The curriculum is high quality and well sequenced from early years onwards, where the essential knowledge and skills that children need for future learning are well thought out. Children are well prepared for Year 1 and beyond. Pupils continue to build their knowledge in a logical order as they progress through school.

Reading is prioritised as soon as children enter the school. The school has a consistent approach to teaching phonics. Pupils thrive because of the consistent routines and high expectations. They stay motivated and focused. The school quickly identifies pupils who fall behind with reading. For pupils who struggle, there are regular intervention activities to help them catch up. They quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers. The school carefully chooses the books that pupils will read to give them a rich menu of texts before they leave the school.

Staff regularly provide pupils with opportunities to revisit key knowledge. In most instances, pupils can recall their learning. However, sometimes this is less secure. The school also checks on how well pupils have gained the knowledge they need. Teachers give feedback on learning to help pupils identify how they can improve their work. However, in some areas, the clarity and regularity of this feedback are inconsistent. This means that some pupils are not always sure about what they need to do to improve or deepen their understanding, including in writing.

Pupils have a very positive attitude to school. Lessons are calm and orderly. Children in early years sustain concentration well and take turns. Older pupils are courteous and kind to each other. Pupils do not worry about bullying. They know staff will deal with any issues quickly and effectively. Pupils attend school regularly. The school is caring but tenacious in following up any absences.

The school has appropriate systems in place to make sure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. The school has a good understanding of these pupils' barriers to learning. It has put plans in place to

support pupils with SEND. In the main, pupils with SEND achieve well alongside their peers. However, sometimes the targets of pupils' learning plans are too broad. It is not always clear enough how teachers should best support pupils to do well using these targets.

The school promotes pupils' personal development through all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils learn to keep safe online and recognise risks to their well-being. They learn about important topics, such as healthy eating and heathy relationships. They understand and value that everyone is unique, with different faiths and beliefs. Indeed, pupils said it would be boring if everyone was the same. Pupils develop a strong moral understanding. Residential trips help develop pupils' independence and confidence.

Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and of their roles and responsibilities. They have the expertise to hold leaders to account. The school community works effectively together to constantly strive for improvement. Governors and leaders have created a supportive environment for staff to thrive in. Staff appreciate the efforts of leaders to support their workload and well-being. This has led to high staff morale.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate body)

- In some instances, pupils do not receive sufficient or clear feedback on how to improve or deepen their understanding. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. The school needs to check that this feedback happens more consistently and effectively so pupils fully achieve the ambitious aims leaders intend.
- The plans in place for staff to support pupils with SEND are not always sufficiently precise. This means that some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. The school must ensure that support for pupils with SEND meets their needs to help them achieve highly.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and

pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	121083
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10345242
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ruth Robinson
Headteacher	Matthew Richards
Website	www.swantonmorleyprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school operates a before- and after-school provision.
- The school is within the Diocese of Norwich. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place within eight years of its last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's educational provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior staff in the school, the chair of the local governing board and other governors.
- The inspector met a representative from the local authority and spoke to a member of the diocese.
- The inspector considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Ashley Best-White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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